

## REMARKS

The Examiner is thanked for the Official Action dated April 15, 2003 and the courtesies extended during the personal interview conducted July 9, 2003. This amendment and request for reconsideration is intended to be fully responsive thereto.


Claims 1, 8, 13 and 15 were objected to for minor informalities which have been corrected by the foregoing amendment. No new matter has been entered.

Claims 1-, 8-10 and 12-21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over James et al. '800 in view of Rapp '745. Claim 22 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Perrulli '444 in view of Calhoun et al. These rejections are respectfully traversed in view of the above amendment and the following remarks.

As discussed during the personal interview conducted on July 9, 2003, the asserted prior art of James et al. '800 and Rapp '745 teach elastic bands that do not include any type of adjustment devices. According to this invention, the article-holding strap has two length adjustment devices and a slidable ring disposed between the two adjustment devices. The prior art fails to teach or render obvious such an arrangement. Independent claims 1 and 22 have been amended to recite a length adjustment device for the article-engaging strap 12 and the article-holding strap 40 whereby the slidable ring 52 is disposed upstream of the length adjustment device (i.e., "between said first article-holding strap length adjustment device and said first releasable fastener"). New claims 23-26 recite the arrangement where there are two length adjustment devices 50 for the article-holding strap 40 and the slidable ring 52 is disposed between the two length adjustment devices 50.

For the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that the currently amended claims are allowable over the prior art. It is respectfully submitted that the above amendments and comments resolve all outstanding issues and place this application in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner believe additional discussion would advance the prosecution of the present application, they are invited to contact the undersigned at the local telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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